

WORDS & VISION

UFV FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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FEBRUARY 2015



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Whatever happened to consultation? A sad tale

Virginia Cooke | Agreements Chair

Once upon a time in a quaint place (but not a tower) called Fraser Valley College, faculty from across almost every academic area (roughly 40% of the faculty) sought a collective means of addressing their concerns over the quality of their students' writing. They met; they talked; they exchanged ideas. At their urging, the administration of this place applied to the provincial Ministry for a modest grant to support the faculty initiative. Begun as a desire among faculty to consider a problem, what developed over a two-year period was a major educational project based on research into many institutions, but tailored to the needs of the college's own students. Along with outcomes of workshops and support for faculty, the other notable outcome was the creation of the Writing Centre run and staffed by faculty from across the disciplines. The Writing Across the Curriculum Initiative received a "Program/Service Excellence Award" from the national Association of Canadian Community Colleges. The Writing Centre grew, as did the quaint place and the numbers of students and all the faculty and they all lived happily ever . . . we'll just stop there.

The time for the beginning of the story was actually 1987, but the fairy-tale framing indicates what a different world seems depicted in this story. If we fast-forward

just over 25 years to 2015, here is the new version.

Sometime in 2014, a small group of administrators decided that a shiny new Student Success Centre should exist at the University of the Fraser Valley, based on the principle that students learn best from each other, and that those doing the teaching learn the most. But they kept it a big secret until they could surprise everyone on a Friday afternoon in January, 2015. They couldn't just create the Centre magically, so they slew the Writing Centre to make room (and budget--but I know, budgets don't belong in these stories). And the administrators dressed the idea with phrases like "faculty led," "cross-disciplinary," and "student-peer driven", but no one talked to all the people who teach the students and who might have some very good ideas about what kind of support they need. So the surprised faculty wanted to know about the new centre and what exactly it was going to look like and how faculty would "lead" and what "cross disciplines" would be involved and how the student peers would be properly trained and what happened to their Writing Centre, and why the principles didn't seem to apply to the Math Centre. . . and whether the Emperor had any clothes on at all. And they remembered (kind of wistfully) those

days when the faculty had a collective idea and the administration supported them to make it happen . . . we'll just stop there.

The second story could be so different. Let's pretend that the administrators had met with the faculty and said something like the following: "We've been looking at centres for student support. UFV has a great many "at-risk" students who aren't getting the support they need in many areas, and the current model of the Writing Centre is unsustainable in this fiscal climate, and cannot handle the array or volume of supports we think are needed. If we were to envision something new, something which incorporated some of what the Writing Centre currently offers, and that could help our ever-growing International component of students succeed, what might that look like? What do your students most need to be successful? We know those of you in English and Communications have given much thought and research to students' writing, and our Writing Centre faculty have expertise in this area. We know that those in other disciplines have strong ideas of what their students need for success. We have models of what "best practices" look like in some other institutions, and many of these involve student peer support, and we can show you some of these models. If we involve

students, as we do in Supported Learning Groups, what kind of training do they need to successfully help others? Can we work together on some of these ideas?"

In the current environment, perhaps this last invitation to "pretend" becomes especially difficult. No one needs to be stuck in a 25-year-old model of what works best for all our students, nor do we need to rely on the "majority" of faculty to come up with a shared initiative, given the current size of our academic faculty. But consultation, and sharing ideas and expertise, are not, or certainly should not be, somehow considered "old school" or unrealistic or too time-consuming or inconsistent with making personnel decisions.

The January 30 UFV Today proudly announced that UFV is considered among the "top employers in B.C." The announcement, quoting our administration, emphasizes the "collegial, supportive atmosphere for staff and faculty alike," and notes that UFV seeks academically prepared faculty "who thrive in a workplace culture which believes the ongoing exchange of ideas and knowledge can transform lives as well as inform everyday practices." Further, the article refers to the "unique atmosphere that has been created by people working together to build the institution through

its various phases. . . Everyone who works here has been part of building a university." Ironically, these comments would certainly make one think of the place described in our first story above (the "once-upon-a-time" place). Unfortunately, many of us are feeling that decisions that affect us, our departments, and our students are increasingly being "delivered" by administrators as pronouncements from on high.

Which brings me to another story, the ancient Greek one about Zeus, who called for relief from his headache by having his head split open. Out sprang Athena, fully formed and dressed in armour, ready for battle. We can be pretty sure that wisdom isn't really produced this way, though in this Provincial climate, administrators probably can attest to the headache part. But any kind of truly applicable wisdom is derived from a process which does not ignore the wisdom of others. As faculty and staff, on whose knowledge and love of learning this institution is built, we must resist the erosion of true consultation and the emergence of pre-emptory directives as the model for decisions at UFV.





“For every dime they give us, a battle must be fought”

Jonathan Hughes | Chief Negotiator

On January 15, 2015 the FSA tabled 84 proposals in exchange for 21 from management, and thus began active bargaining. The large number of proposals from the FSA reflects the number of issues that we have with the contract, and though management's count is lower, theirs is multilayered. In accordance with a “grocery-cart” approach, the voice of FSA minorities has gone forward in the proposal package; however, I caution against unreasonable expectations. Bargaining meetings have been informal, at times light, but it's clear that the primary limiting factors include the government's interest in cutting costs while they increase their control over operations at the local level. That said, the FSA contract team has met with management twice per week for a couple of hours each session, exchanged proposal language, and come to agreement on some articles, but we're still trying to understand the devil in the details.

FPSE, the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators, has signed a tentative “template” or “common” agreement with PSEA, the Post-Secondary Employers' Association. Highlights of this agreement include a 5.5 per cent wage increase over five years in addition to an economic stability dividend. From the tentative template agreement: “Employees will receive a general wage increase (GWI) equal to one-half

(1/2) of any percentage gain in real GDP [gross domestic product] above the forecast of the Economic Forecast Council for the relevant calendar year.” Clear as mud, right? Regardless, the FSA and UFV must have a tentative agreement in place by September 1, 2015 in order to receive retroactive wage adjustment. Though UFV is not required to sign the template agreement, the government will likely impose these salary adjustments and term of contract in our Collective Agreement.

Somewhat worrying in the template agreement is a letter of understanding to review collective agreements. Though a centralized approach might simplify administrative process within the sector, it might also reduce the ability for locals to negotiate their issues while at the same time making it easier for government to limit the success of post-secondary education through underfunding and overregulation.

In closing, our diverse union gives us strength, if we choose to use it. And when considering the state of higher education in North America, we need all the help we can get. I encourage you to consider the well being of all employees, whether they be staff, tenured-faculty, or part-time employees. To quote the late great Hazel Dickens:

“United we stand, divided we fall

For every dime they give us, a battle must be fought

So working people use your power the key to liberty

Don't support the rich man's style of luxury.”



Celebrate and embrace faculty and staff differences

Connie Cyrull | Staff Vice President

I would like to apologize to all the staff members, present or not, who have heard the unfortunate comment about staff employees at our EGM on December 16th, and especially for the staff member who, though confessedly not a usual speaker in large groups, felt compelled enough to address the comment.

A Business instructor cast a pall over the entire proceedings which I feel I must address. Every student enrolled in this institution is processed through a staff member. Staff members conduct assessments, advise students about course selections, assist with financial aid, take payment for courses, help students find their textbooks or check out their library books, and support them with housing. It is a staff member who makes team travel arrangements for UFV Cascade athletes, who maintains the lighting and sound equipment in the theatre and mentors students in using this equipment, who answers the phone and directs callers to the right destination, who empties the garbage and recycling bins and cleans the restrooms. It is staff who deliver mail, equipment, books and other materials around and between campus locations, who clear snow and ice off sidewalks, roadways and parking lots very early in the morning before the rest of us get here on a wintry day and who mow lawns, rake leaves, prune vegetation and pick up cigarette butts during most of the rest of the year. It is staff who maintain heating and cooling systems, fix broken plumbing, lab equipment and building structures and replace light bulbs, all while working in extreme environments, including heights, tight spaces, and around equipment with moving parts. It is staff who organize and carry out special events like graduations, who recruit and support international students, who organize room bookings and timetables, make sure we get our paycheques, benefits, professional development opportunities and administer our pension plans. These are just some of the services performed by staff belonging to a Faculty & Staff Association. I believe we should be celebrating and embracing our differences while appreciating and respecting the diversity between faculty and staff.

I hold all Faculty in the highest regard, but I have an equal amount of esteem for the many staff who, through



the efficient performance of their duties, have made UFV an institution that students appreciate attending and is not a bad place to work.

Now I will get off my soap box and get back to bargaining.

Chief Negotiator, Jonathan Hughes, eloquently expressed our intentions and bargaining began in earnest on the 15th of January. Management were a little surprised by the number of proposals we brought forward compared to their twenty one, but we are wading through steadily with the aid of a fairly grueling schedule. During the buildup to bargaining, many of us met with employees to narrow down issues. You talked and we listened. The culmination of those talks are the eighty four proposals we compiled to present to management.

Lisa Morry and I are hoping to get the time to continue handing out hard copies and a snack, once this edition returns from printing, as well as scheduling more coffee and cookies meetings and executive staff meetings. We have found these most useful in keeping touch with the needs and wishes of the membership, so thank you to all who attended these sessions on both the Abbotsford and CEP campuses.



THE RULES OF DISENGAGEMENT or HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BUSINESS-MODEL BOMB

**Vicki
Grieve** | President

I don't know about you, but I'd feel much better about the big decisions being made around here if they stemmed from a consultative process and careful deliberation by those directly affected, like faculty, staff and students, as well as managers and administrators. Whatever happened to collegial governance? Who decided we should engage in top-down corporate-style decision making? Admittedly, there is more than a little awkwardness when decisions involve reallocating scarce resources or reorganizing departments, faculties or services. In our current circumstance, the need for change seems mostly driven by fiscally restrained government policies regarding the funding and purpose of post-secondary education. Nevertheless, although the government does dictate what must be decided (usually how to make do with less money) it does not tell us how to make the decisions. In the past few years, it seems like the people who do the front-line work of our institution (those who directly teach and support students) are increasingly being left out of big-picture decision making. I know that it's hard to ask people to engage in a process that may ultimately disadvantage them or make their work lives more difficult, but with equal conviction I know that change is easier to accept and implement when those affected have had a hand in its design, when their expertise and skill has been acknowledged and valued.

I used to worry about how to hold on to both the spirit and practicalities of our traditions, which evolved from our roots as the little-college-that-could, with its gene-

sis in the human potential movement of the 60s and 70s. Embedded in the ideals of the era was the notion that everyone is important and has something to contribute. We became an oxymoron: a humanistic institution. Innovative programming and services emerged, generated by the passions of faculty, staff and yes, administrators, who perceived unfulfilled needs or more effective means of academic program delivery. Think "Power and Knowledge," which was a hugely successful integrated humanities program/first year experience for Arts students, or the long-running College Achievement Program (CAP) for First Nations students. We had an



on-campus day-care for students, staff and community members. These initiatives were all developed through consultation and collaboration. I used to worry about hanging on to a good thing.

Now I worry about hanging on to our Collective Agreement, which sets down the rules of engagement for how we navigate the relationship between us and our

employer. Increasingly over the last few years during bargaining, we've had to contend with a disembodied third party in the room—PSEA, the cryptically named Post-Secondary Employers Association, staffed by members of the Ministry of Advanced Education and directly accountable to The Treasury Board. What our administrators can and cannot bargain is controlled by PSEA's agenda, which has two main items: cost containment and the curtailment of institutional autonomy. I don't think the Ministry wants to deal with distinctly different collective agreements within our "special-purpose university" sector; instead, they'd like us to all be the same. It's easier to make us fit within their business-model that way. PSEA has the final say on the rules and regulations that our administrators must enact. It is not an enviable position for our administration to be in, yet to return to my original point, I don't think PSEA's tentacles have reached so far as to dictate institution-based decision making procedures. So while I have some sympathy for the fiscal and the policy constraints that our administrators work within, I'm decidedly less sympathetic when it starts to feel like decisions are being handed down from head office in New York, like we are experiencing thinly disguised corporate restructuring. If our administration wants disengaged and demoralized employees, they should keep this up.

Fortunately, we have a Collective Agreement which stands between us and our management's ability to make unilateral "surprise" decisions regarding the organization of academic programming. We can (and do) make moral appeals to the collegial decision-making processes of our past when faced with the imposition of top-down decisions, but these don't seem to be effective, especially when the decision-makers are new and have not been part of a shared history. Cue the Collective Agreement, which does contain language about the requirement for consultation. According to the "definitions" section of the agreement,

"Consultation" shall be understood to mean a process through which the employer will deliberate with the Association with regard to some specified issue or matter...the consultation process is intended as a vehicle through which the Employer will seek the advice or opinion of the Association, and through which the parties may make known their respective views and opinions, but it is not intended to connote consensus or mutual agreement. (Article 1.2)

The cynics among us may say that the last phrase of the definition renders the activity of consultation useless: that even after consulting management can go ahead and do what it wants. That may be true, but if we ad-

FPSE Climate Survey Coming Soon: Let Your Voice be Heard!

To help track and gauge some of the critical issues in our post-secondary system, the FPSE's Presidents' Council has developed a survey instrument. Members at every Local will be asked to provide feedback on conditions within their institution. The Survey is designed to assess various factors that contribute to teaching, learning and working conditions at each institution. Results will be compiled for individual Locals as well as aggregated at the provincial level.

The survey will be available between February 20th and March 6th. The FSA will send out more information about the survey and instructions on how to complete it soon.

here to the spirit of what is described in the Agreement, decisions will not seem to come from nowhere, and there is the possibility that management may be swayed by the opinions and advice they are contractually required to seek. The Agreement goes on, in Article 2.9, to broadly state that consultation should occur on the "present and future operation of UFV"

I don't think the legal strength of this language has ever been tested through a grievance or arbitration proceeding here at UFV. In the past, we have enjoyed collegial governance and relatively positive labour-relations. That was then, this is now, as the saying goes. For me, the dismantling and closure of the Writing Centre symbolizes an evolving method of management that left unchallenged will transform us into some kind of entity that bears more resemblance to a corporation than a democratic educational institution. It may be time to put our collective agreement language to the test.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

INSPIRING CHANGE: JOIN THE CONVERSATION

MARCH 8TH, 2015 | 11-3PM
ABBOTSFORD, BRITISH COLUMBIA

EVERYONE WELCOME, FREE ADMISSION!
FEATURING AN INTERACTIVE ART EXHIBIT THAT EXPLORES THE THEME OF "HOME."

1 BILLION RISING 4 REVOLUTION

11AM-1PM

DANCE | MUSIC | SPEAKERS | OPEN MIC

THUNDERBIRD MEMORIAL SQUARE
CIVIC PLAZA 32315 S. FRASER WAY

SHOWCASING THE FILM:
THE HONOR DIARIES
CULTURE IS NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE

1PM-3PM

FOLLOWED BY AN INTERACTIVE
PANEL DISCUSSION

THE REACH GALLERY MUSEUM
32388 VETERANS WAY | TEL: 604 864 8087

PLEASE REGISTER FOR FILM SCREENING BY CONTACTING THE REACH AS SEATING IS LIMITED.

PLEASE VISIT: [FACEBOOK/ABBOTSFORDONEBILLIONRISING](https://www.facebook.com/abbotsfordonebillionrising)

FOR FURTHER INFO PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:
DEESH SEKHON (GIRLKIND) 604 825 8088 | KRIS FOULDS (THE REACH) 604 864 8087 EXT 112 | KUSUM SONI (UFV) 604-851 6325



From “University” to Degree Mill in Seven Short Years

Hilary Turner | Department Head

Early in 2008, the University College of the Fraser Valley, together with four other institutions, was proclaimed a university by then premier Gordon Campbell. Campbell left elected office soon after this great benefaction; the whole thing seems to have been a legacy project on his part. Still, it doesn't seem all that long ago that many of us rejoiced to think that the new designation would mean a boost to our academic credibility. Little did we know that the Universities Act would be simultaneously amended to exclude us from the prerogatives of most universities. We would not enjoy a senate dominated by faculty, nor could we expect funding for research (except as “time and resources permit”). Largely through a series of poor management decisions, the acquisition of rank and tenure, another hallmark of a “real” university, became one of the most bitterly contested changes in our history. As far as the attainment of university status is concerned, it seems, the chase was a good deal better than the kill.

Then came the dreary “entrepreneurial” phase. It seems to have lasted from 2010 till about 2013, though I suspect it is still alive and well in some misguided strat-plan or ed-plan or sem-plan, none of which can seem to keep my eyes open for more than ten or fifteen minutes. (Are they mind-numbing on purpose?) Nevertheless, no one ever made clear exactly what “entrepreneurial” was supposed to mean, though I do recall something billed as a “debate” between Eric Davis and Adrienne Chan in which the two agreed that UFV needs to be more entrepreneurial. I found this funny at the time. That was a debate? Oddly, or perhaps ominously, I haven't heard the word spoken seriously in a couple of years.

And here we are now. I am amazed to be a bit nostalgic for the entrepreneurial days because the new phase seems quite a bit more sinister. Lately, it is all about cutting courses, units, staff, and programmes that are not

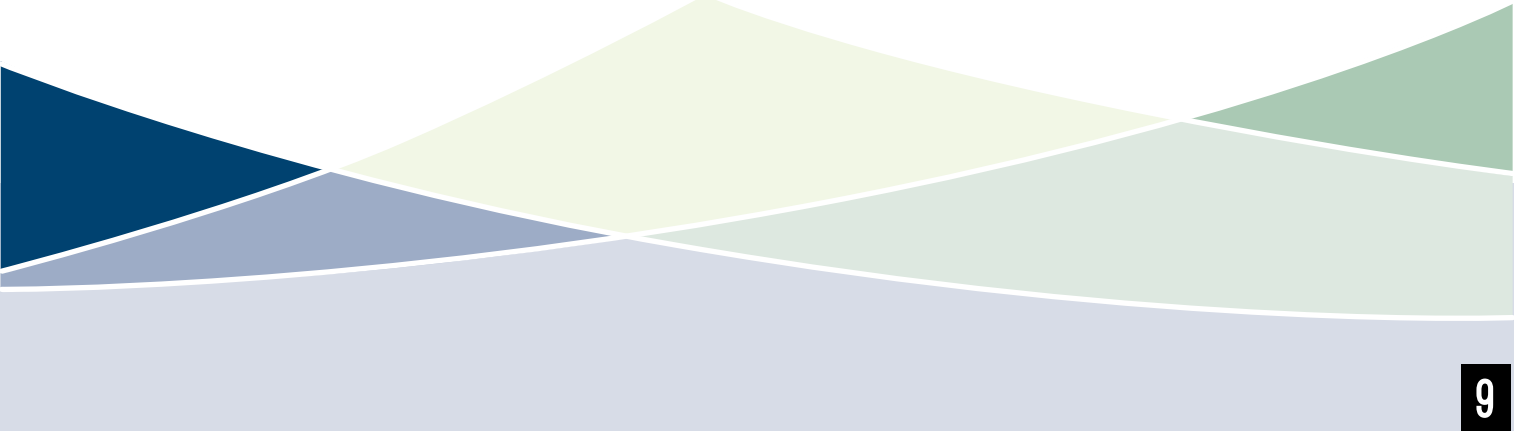
profitable. The Writing Centre is suddenly “unsustainable” (according to Eric Davis); long-time ESL faculty are without work; Faculty Reception, a real service to students, could not be maintained beyond 2013; the Fashion Design diploma program is about to close; Program Advisors are soon to be relocated and reorganized under a needless layer of bureaucracy; and courses that do not enrol well (no matter their academic worth) are routinely cut (in Arts, anyway; I don't know about other Faculties). The all-but-invisible Sessionals who teach about thirty per cent of our courses find their work shrinking as courses are cancelled and other faculty are involuntarily transferred.

I find it hard to agree, in light of all this, that UFV is a university at all. Faculty and staff are what they have always been—dedicated, competent, loyal, and innovative. But we are not well represented by our administrators who seem now to regard students as commodities, employees as mere pawns, and the mission to deliver the best undergraduate education in Canada as a task for MarCom or Student Services. Smoke and mirrors, that is—not the real thing.

My fellow faculty members keep delivering the goods—I do not mean to suggest otherwise. But we are tired and demoralized. We regard our students as real human beings, not FTEs. We think our work—our research, teaching, and service—is important to the whole of society. But after all this nonsense from government and administration (who speak, more and more, the same language) how much longer are we going to play the game and pretend they have any idea of what higher education is all about?

Hilary Turner, Head, Department of English

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS





Budget cuts, workload, reassignment and fitness

Laura Chomiak | Staff Contract Administrator

I wanted to thank everyone for attending the FSA Extraordinary General (EGM) Meeting on December 16, and for your questions regarding our bargaining priorities. For those who were not able to attend, the Bargaining Committee presented the package that was sent to our members, and we discussed the 'shopping cart' of bargaining priorities we were presenting to management. We are now into week two of bargaining, and will spend the next eight weeks working towards a better Collective Agreement for our members.

With the new-year upon us I know a number of members are waiting in anticipation of what this years' budget will bring, especially since the bumping process which started again in November due to the Federal Government cutting funding to English as a Second Language program is still ongoing. I will continue to work with staff members who are and will be affected by this latest round of bumping. I'm hopeful that our members will be settled into their new positions over the next couple of months. I know there have been a lot of concerns expressed by staff members who feel targeted in these budget cuts and the workload issues and work reassignments that have taken place. I wish I knew what we could expect in this upcoming budget announcement so we could prepare for the possible ripple effect it may cause. Like you, I am hoping for the best, but anticipating and preparing for the possibility that we may see some members affected when the Board approves the new 2015-16 budget.

On December 4, Connie Cyrull, Lisa Morry and I met with members at the Chilliwack Staff Cookie and Coffee Q&A session. The focus of the discussion was around fitness and wellness at work. To keep involved in the fitness initiatives on our campuses, I will be attending the Campus Recreation and Wellness Committee meetings which are spearheaded by UFV's Cascades Athletic Department. The goals of the committee are to promote and build on the current activities and initiatives for healthy life choices within the UFV community.

This month I attended an FPSE Conference on the impact to faculty and staff in post-secondary institutions due to underfunding, program rationalization, current and future educational policies in BC, and just-in-time higher education. This week I will be attending my second Contract Administration and Review Committee (CARC) meeting where I will again have the opportunity to meet with other contract administrators to discuss issues within our institutions. I am also working with staff on concerns ranging from sick leave to job description and classification processes to name a few. Please remember, if there is anything that I or your staff stewards, or staff VP can do to assist you, please contact us.

I hope everyone had an opportunity to spend time with family and friends during the holidays. Wishing you all a Happy New Year and looking forward to only the best in 2015!



Pension information you can use

Debbie Dyck | UFV Officer Pensions and Benefits

UFV offers staff enrolment in the Municipal Pension Plan (MPP) at eligibility and offers faculty and senior administrators enrolment in the College Pension Plan (CPP) which are both Defined Benefit Pension plans. Members may or may not be aware there is a lot of discussion throughout Canada regarding conversion of Defined Benefit Pension Plans (DB) to Defined Contribution Pension Plans (DC). The Municipal Pension Plan Board of Trustees Chair has forwarded this information to all MPP employers encouraging them to distribute it to MPP members. This information pertains to all Defined Benefit plans so faculty enrolled in the College Pension Plan may be interested in this information as well.

If you have any questions about the MPP or the following information from the Municipal Pension Plan Board of Trustees, please contact Debbie Dyck in Human Resources at local 4653 or debbie.dyck@ufv.ca

Anyone advocating the conversion of public sector defined benefit (DB) pension plan to defined contribution (DC) arrangement should research past experience carefully and be realistic about the likely outcomes, say Dr. Robert L. Brown, a retired professor from the University of Waterloo and president of the International Actuarial Association, and Craig McInnes, a business journalist and writer.

Their research paper "Shifting Public Sector DB Plans to DC - The Experience So Far and Implications for Canada (ccplc.ca)" found that DC pension plans are less efficient at generating retirement income and result in higher costs for employers and employees.

After examining the experience of five American and Canadian jurisdictions that converted their public sector pension plans to DC arrangements, the authors conclude that there were negative financial consequences in every

jurisdiction for government, employers and members. The study found that:

- Dollar for dollar, DB plans, like the Municipal Pension Plan (MPP), provide better value
- Public sector DB plans in Canada, like the MPP, are efficient investors, generating 75 cents of every dollar they pay in benefits from investment returns
- DC conversions transfer significant risk to individual employees, jeopardizing their income security in retirement
- Inadequate retirement income will increase the need for taxpayer-support social benefits for seniors, and
- Retirees with inadequate retirement income will be more reliant on taxpayer-supported social programs, like the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

Your membership in the Municipal Pension Plan is a valuable asset, to you, your family and your community. Find out more about your pension at StraightTalk.mpp.straighttalk.pensionsbc.ca.

Pension plan trustee nominations

The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators is calling for nominations for the position of one of three trustees to the College Pension Plan board, replacing Dominique Roelants, who resigned and was replaced temporarily by Doug Birtwistle.

FPSE's Pension Advisory Committee is seeking nominations for the 2015-2018 position from its locals, interviewing nominees, and then making its recommendation to FPSE Presidents' Council.

Trustees are expected to attend pension board meetings in Victoria at dates that are yet to be determined. Expenses and release time will be covered by FPSE. For more information about the trustee position, please see these attachments:

Interested faculty are invited to submit a curriculum vitae of no more than two pages, a brief statement of interest and a letter of support from the local president to ztowle@fpse.ca and pheaslip@tru.ca by 4:00 pm, Monday, February 16, 2015.



Why the \$15 minimum wage matters to you

Lisa Morry | Communications Chair

We're deep in bargaining for our next contract and realistically not expecting a wage hike higher than that other public sector unions have been getting. We all know that small hike doesn't keep pace with inflation, not after years of wage freezes and small increases. Every time I buy groceries, the prices of some items have increased from the previous week. Utility costs are increasing, housing costs are increasing and the only silver lining is the reduced prices at the gas pump (which should bring down the grocery price increases instituted to take into account higher gas prices a few years ago, but of course, it won't).

We make decent wages if we work at the university full time. Faculty and management make significantly more than staff (excepting non-regulars), but even full-time staff earn a living wage. Now imagine that you lose everything and have to take a part-time job in retail or fast food. Can you sustain your current lifestyle on \$10.25 an hour? Neither can I. A long time ago when I was out of work and the minimum wage was more like \$7 per hour, someone advised me to get a job at WalMart. I replied that I would need two jobs at WalMart to make ends meet. And then who would be home for the kids at any hour? In the United States some WalMart employees subsist on food stamps, Medicaid and other taxpayer-funded benefits because they can't care for their families based on the wages they take home—some \$6.2 billion in public money, according to Forbes: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/clareoconnor/2014/04/15/report-walmart-workers-cost-taxpayers-6-2-billion-in-public-assistance/>. According to Americans for Tax Fairness, Walmart also benefits from the food stamps their employees and other poor people use to buy food.

One of the richest families in America, the Walton family, who owns Walmart, also benefits from a variety of tax breaks and subsidies: read the full report from Americans for Tax Fairness here: <http://www.americansfortaxfairness.org/files/Walmart-on-Tax-Day-Americans-for-Tax-Fairness-1.pdf>.

I feel sorry for the Target employees who will soon be losing their jobs, including Target employees in Chilliwack, who perhaps weren't earning much, but they were earning something. Target ex-CEO Gregg Steinhafel's good-bye package is estimated at \$61 million, according to the CBC. That's about the same amount the company's Canadian workers will get altogether for their severance packages: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/target-s-package-for-ex-ceo-matches-package-for-all-17-600-canadian-workers-1.2927893>. Meanwhile, Canada's top CEOs continue to make 171 times more money than the average Canadian, writes Hugh Mackenzie of The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives" http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2014/01/All_in_a_Days_Work_CEO_%20Pay.pdf. While the average Canadian income was \$47,358, the top 100 Canadian CEOs earned \$9.2 million in 2013: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/ceo-pay-increased-at-twice-the-rate-of-average-canadian-since-2008-1.2888117>. Inequal-



From left, FSA Communications Chair Lisa Morry, Staff Contract Administrator Laura Chomiak and JPDC Co-chair Vicki Bolan demonstrate for fair wages outside the Vancouver Convention Centre during the BC Federation of Labour Convention on November 26

ity has never been greater, according to American political economist Richard Reich: <http://inequalityforall.com/> and the Broadbent Institute: <http://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/en/issue/income-inequality>.

So, most of us have not lost our jobs and had to take a part-time Mcjob, so we're okay, right? Not so fast. The numbers of people in our community who do have to work in retail, fast food or other low-waged jobs, bring down the wealth of the community generally. If you earn minimum wage, how do you move out of the family home in your teens or 20s? With the cost of tuition, housing, food and transportation, who can afford to attend university? How many can get a great job without post-secondary training? How do families make it to the end of the month and still have groceries in the cupboard? All these low wages mean these workers don't have the disposable income to go to the movie theatre, eat at a restaurant, take a vacation, or shop at local businesses. BC has the second-highest poverty rate in the country. According to the Child Poverty Report Card, one in five BC children are poor: <http://still1in5.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/First-Call-Coalition-Report-Card-2014-FINAL-WEB.pdf>. According to the low-income cut-off, one in 10 British Columbians live in poverty. If you choose the market basket share, one in seven British Columbians lives in poverty: <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/2014/12/latest-poverty-stats-show-bc-still-has-one-of-the-highest-poverty-rates->



“The fundamental law of capitalism is, when workers have more money, businesses have more customers and need more workers. When restaurants pay restaurant workers enough so that even they can afford to eat in restaurants, that's not bad for the restaurant business. That's good for it, despite what some restaurateurs may tell you.”

in-canada/. A look at the data shows we have the highest poverty rate among working age people, 18-64.

Some members of the one per cent get it. Just listen to Nick Hanauer in this Ted Talk: Beware, Fellow Plutocrats, the pitchforks are coming: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2gO4DKVpa8>. Hanauer supports a \$15 an hour minimum wage, like that approved in Seattle, which is booming as a result, he said. “The fundamental law of capitalism is, when workers have more money, businesses have more customers and need more workers. When restaurants pay restaurant workers enough so that even they can afford to eat in restaurants, that's not bad for the restaurant business. That's good for it, despite what some restaurateurs may tell you,” Hanauer says in the Ted Talk.

My hairdresser asked me recently if I was really into all this “union stuff.” I told him that union wages were the reason I was sitting in his chair, getting my hair done. If I was earning minimum wage, I would be looking

in my bathroom mirror, cutting my bangs with nail scissors and he might be closing up shop because not enough people could afford his services.

So maybe if everyone who works at WalMart in the U.S. made enough money

that they didn't need to rely on government programs to get by, then taxpayers wouldn't have to subsidize families like the Waltons. Maybe if all the Mcjobs that seem to be available locally these days paid at least \$15 an hour, your 20 or 30-something son or daughter could afford to move out of your basement. Maybe if everyone in our community could afford to pay taxes and go out for dinner or visit a hair salon and support local small businesses, then we would all be better off.

The BC Federation of Labour is holding fight for \$15 rallies on the 15th of each month. For more information, check out the BC Fed's Facebook page and website: <http://bcfed.ca/>. February's rally is at Acorn BC, 625 Howe Street, Vancouver.

“Teaching trades is hard work, so it’s nice to have a union behind me, doing everything in its power to make my job as safe as possible. That’s what I call fair”

**together
WE’VE GOT
SAFER WORKPLACES.**



Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

www.canadianlabour.ca

The balance between satisfaction and challenge

Randy Kelley | Faculty Contract Administrator

I’ll continue with the same idea that I started in my last newsletter submission with; looking back and reflecting on my activities of the last month helps me, and I hope you, see the value of this work. The issues brought to me are increasingly complex in both nature and resolution, so it seems increasingly important to slow down and take stock of the labour climate in which we work.

Confidentiality and privacy often rightly prevent the disclosure of the most satisfying aspects of this work, but I at least can see the progress that we have made and identify the areas in which continued efforts must be made.

I’m increasingly aware that the most challenging aspects of the administration of our Collective Agreement involve relationships.

Whether those relationships are between faculty and faculty, faculty and staff, faculty and management, or faculty and students, it is working with these relationships that makes the administration of our contract both challenging and rewarding.

In point form, some of the issues that I am currently working on include:

- Workload assignment questions,
- Supporting faculty in the student academic appeal process,
- Representing faculty in discussions regarding workload issues and students in Independent Studies sections,
- Supporting faculty in student harassment complaints,

- Supporting faculty in accessing disability leaves,
- Representing faculty in pursuit of sabbatical leaves,
- Representing staff and faculty in Occupational Health and Safety issues,
- English as a Second Language and Writing Centre bumping and transfer issues,
- Assisting members working through interpersonal conflict issues in the workplace,
- Representing faculty member in investigation meeting with Dean

Since last writing, those of us on the FSA’s bargaining committee have begun meeting with the management reps as we seek to reach agreement on a negotiated settlement. I think it’s clear to all of the reps on the committee that we don’t yet have a perfect settlement, and perhaps never will, but I think it’s equally clear that each of us will strive to find workable improvements for our members.

As always I’m interested and available to help work through any contract issues you may be facing, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

US Sessionals risk it all over job action

Our non-regular or adjunct colleagues in the US will be walking out of their jobs on Wednesday, February 25 to draw attention to compensation and working conditions for Sessionals. Although there is no local event, there is information about US events and a reminder about the working conditions for Sessionals in Canada.

This article, by Andrew Robinson from Carleton University, poignantly lays out the poverty-stricken situation for many part-time faculty. Andrew, who has a PhD in physics, earns \$34,000 a year and says his family qualifies for provincial assistance. He wrote this after deciding he didn’t have time to find last year’s exam for a student, even though he would have liked to help out.

I had finally decided that “enough’s enough.” I work for a pittance, and I cannot go on doing work for free. I am sorry that this directly affects students, but if the university wants a “full service” teacher, then they need to pay us as a highly qualified professional person would expect to be paid.

Read his full article here: https://medium.com/@AndrewR_Physics/enoughs-enough-6c56afe36d00.

At UBC, Sessionals will not be walking out, but they will be wearing blue to raise awareness and support their American colleagues. CAUT, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, will be encouraging Sessionals to wear green.

Here’s an article from the Washington Post about compensating

adjunct faculty for their education and their work: Adjunct professors get poverty-level wages. Should their pay quintuple? <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/work-blog/wp/2015/02/06/adjunct-professors-get-poverty-level-wages-should-their-pay-quintuple/>.

This article, A Day Without Adjuncts, talks about adjunct working conditions and proposes that adjuncts wear a t-shirt advertising their status as a kind of “coming out” rather than walking out. “You can’t get fired for wearing a T-shirt,” wrote one adjunct, “that’s free speech.” <https://www.inside-highered.com/news/2015/01/27/national-adjunct-walkout-day-approaches-attracting-both-enthusiasm-and-questions>.

FSA FUN CORNER

Our cheesy limerick or haiku contest has so far received three entries. Challenge Korina Gratton, Melinda Saretzky and Sylvia Santiago for great prizes. We will print all qualifying entries loosely related to a UFV theme. Inquiries or submissions can be sent to tanja.rourke@ufv.ca

Sylvia Santiago :

Time for a coffee break
Out of my cubicle to jolt my sleepiness
and be awake
Dread the long line-up at Tim's
But wouldn't want to miss promo "Roll-up-the-rim-to win"
For a chance to win just another cup of coffee or coffee cake

Melinda Saretzky:

The hallways are bright and cheery
It helps when my mind gets weary
Walking in snow
Is fun, you know
Especially when contemplating theory

Korina Gratton:

I have no money to print!
I simply have to vent:
The bookstores too far
I'd need my car
And the print job is already sent.

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Staff Vice-President	Connie Cyrull	4214
Faculty Contract Administrator	Randy Kelley	4354
Staff Contract Administrator	Laura Chomiak	4593
Chief Negotiator	Jonathan Hughes	A406e
Secretary/Treasurer	Ding Lu	4209
Communications Chair	Lisa Morry	2471
Agreements Chair	Virginia Cooke	4516
JCAC Co-Chair	Gayle Noel	4093
JPDC Co-Chair	Vicki Bolan	4543
OH&S Co-Chair	Noham Weinberg	4493
Social Committee	Ruby Ord	4382
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